

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

86	THE BRIBRI
372 [237] [412] • 50/ [439] 282 415 [171] 534	generated, which requires only a few moments. Even those Indians who have modern appliances use the hand drill for lighting ceremonial fires. <i>Fire Fans.</i>—Pl. XXIII, <i>b</i>, represents a type of feather fan, used chiefly to accelerate flame. They are composed of nine or ten feathers of a large bird, laid parallel and fastened together at the base by a split reed wrapping, in some cases reinforced with a binding of cotton or other fiber. <i>Canoes.</i>—Although the Bribri have “cayukas” obtained from foreigners, no canoes of native manufacture were found. A toy canoe, about three feet long, was observed in one settlement; this was fashioned from a log and pointed at both ends. Gabb states that even in his time the Bribri had no canoes of their own. <i>Leather Pouches.</i>—Pl. XXV, <i>b</i>, illustrates a crude leathern pouch used as a carrying bag; it closely resembles a common North American type. <i>Musical Instruments.</i>—The drum is the most important musical instrument of the Bribri. In shape the common native instru-
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305 sea, skirting the coast westward to Quepos and eastward to the Golfo Dulce, as well as out to Caños Island, furnished another avenue of travel. Dug-out canoes are used in the river, and a larger canoe, called a *bongo* in Spanish, was used on the sea. These *bongos* had sails of bark cloth (see p. 18) which were fastened to a framework of sticks. There are only three kinds of trees utilized for making the canoes, the *espevel*, the sandbox tree, and the *guanacaste* (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum* [Jacq.] Griseb.). The canoe is caulked with wax, from certain bees (*Apis Trigona?* or *Melipona?*), which live in the ground on Caños Island. It is said that this is one of the few places in which this species of bee is known to exist in southeastern Costa Rica. It is interesting that this wax contains a majority of resin and very little wax, as the analysis given in the appendix shows (see p. 41). Formerly, the Indians visited Caños Island especially to obtain the wax, coming away with as much as 30 or 50 pounds in their canoes. Nowadays, since the island is no

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283 Cordage. The Boruca have two principal fibers which serve for making cord, and two which are employed but slightly. The chief fibers are *majagua* (see p. 7), and the *bejuco negro*, or, *brit* (see p. 11). These are used for making rope, string, baskets, and hammocks. In addition to this, the leaves of the *pita* plant and, at times, the leaves of the *cabuya* plant (*Furcraea* spp. and *Agave* spp.) are utilized for bags and rope.

The *majagua* is prepared by cutting a piece of the tree and stripping off the extreme outer part, using only the inner portion. To make rope from this, the fiber is tied around a tree or post and cut into strips, the quantity depending on the quality of rope desired, as the greater the number of strips, the finer the product. Figure 8, c shows the *majagua* fiber ready for use. The *bejuco*, or vine, is prepared by scraping off the outer bark with a knife of *caña blanca*, washed, and then cut into the desired strips. It takes a day to make this vine ready for use. The *pita* is also scraped with a cane knife until it is white all over. It is then washed in the creek or river, and cut into the

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[P. 21 (A)]

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Bribri
Cabecar

492
184 Very seldom on the Caribbean, but frequently on the Pacific side, horses and oxen are used for transportation (see Domestic Animals; fig. 2, d).

• 501
[133] By Water. The rivers in Bribri and Cabecar territory on the Pacific side do not lend themselves to water transportation. It is interesting to note that here the usual word for a boat, in both tongues, is a corruption of the Spanish canoe: *kanó* in Bribri; *kono* in Cabecar. The Bribri of the Caribbean littoral, however, use besides the term just given, the word *ru*.⁸⁸

[192] Both Gabb and Skinner call attention to the lack of water craft among the Bribri,⁸⁷ but Pittier mentions cedar and ceiba canoes, some equipped with a sail and rudder for the sea.⁸⁸ This last type is not seen today, but dugouts are fairly common in the Sixaola River, men and women paddling or poling when necessary (see Canoes). Balsa logs are tied together with vines making rafts and are used to cross rivers in parts of upper Talamasca. The Cabécares are not seamen in any sense, and only those married to Bribri in the Sixaola Plain are known to manage dugouts.

482 Carrying Devices. The tumpline (see Fibers) is used by men around the shoulders or chest. By women, it is worn around the head for heavy burdens. Babies are carried by women

[854] who tie them in a tumpline around the shoulders or in a piece of *mastate* around the waist (Fig. 9, d.).
[Text continues TOP of P. 21(8)--QMA/157]

MANUFACTURES

283 Fibers. There are many fiber plants used for cordage by these peoples. White cotton, one or two bushes of which are found near every household, is mainly ceremonial in use, being fashioned into string for tying death bundles (see Funeral and Bone Burial). The women make this by rolling the deseeded fibers with the palm of their hands over their thighs. The result is an uneven lumpy string but one that they consider as very essential to prevent bad luck and to protect the dead. For use in sewing clothes, some women also make cotton thread on spindle whorls. Occasionally, small carrying nets are manufactured from it.

[777]
[294] [Text continues bottom of P. 21(8)--Analysr]

⁸⁸ *ru* is also the Boruca word for any water craft.
⁸⁷ Gabb, 1875, p. 523; Skinner, 1920, p. 86.

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Bribri
Cabécar

352 sufficient for an adult to sit in, is an important item of trade. They are found in Cabécar, Térraba, and Boruca households (see Trade).

286 Weaving. The art of weaving was possibly
[177] borrowed by the Bribri from other cultures. It is practically non-existent today and does not appear to have been practised by the Cabécar in historical times. Gabb⁹¹ gives a detailed account of the technique and mentions belts, burial cloths for bones, breech-cloths, and "women's petticoats." Undoubtedly, skirts are meant and not underwear. Skinner cites headbands and blankets.⁹² The only evidence of actual Bribri weaving known to the writer are belts, made by some men on the upper Lari and at Cabagra, and four skirts, made by women who claim to have been taught by the Borucas. The Bribri weave is distinguished by its coarseness. The decoration
[531] of the skirts consists of wide brown and white stripes which suggest a relationship with that of the Borucas.

415 Gourds. Gourds are employed as water jars,
824 containers, and cups for liquids of any kind; as receptacles, often with a *pita* handle for hanging on the wall; for carrying seeds when planting; and as sieves, in particular for making
[252] *pejibaye* flour. Pieces of gourds are sometimes
[264] used as spoons to dish out food and occa-
[334] sionally to eat with. Rattles are also made.

[531] The gourds are generally plain, and when decorated, the designs are crude cuts or child-like drawings. The holes in the sieves are made
[322] with a metal point attached to a wooden handle.

323 Pottery. Today, only in the region of the upper Lari is there any attempt at pottery making. Here the Bribri are said still to fashion the large clay *chicha* jars seen in the round houses (see Furnishings; fig. 4, c) by coiling. This process is described in detail by Skinner.⁹³

273 *Chicha* is generally kept in leaf-lined *batus* or in large wooden troughs.

● 501 Canoes. The Talamancas Bribri are the only
824 people to make canoes. Cedar, *espavel* (*Ana-*

⁹¹ Skinner, 1920, pp. 77-78. The writer has a large brown and white blanket made by the Bribri men about 1908.

⁹² Skinner, 1920, pp. 67-68.

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Bribri
Cabezar

501 *cardium rhinocarupus* D.C.) and *ceiba* (*Ceiba*
 [824] *pentandra* Gaertn.) are the favorite materials.
 [137] The plain of the Sixaola has long been cut
 396 over and these woods are found in the deep
 forest. The Bribri select the tree and fell it,
 fashioning the dugout at the spot and carrying
 it to a waterway. It often takes as long as three
 days to transport the dugout from the place
 of manufacture to a waterway. In making the
 boat, the center of the log is burned and the
 rest is cut out with machete and axe.

237 Bone. Monkey and deer bones are made into
 needles (see Nets). The leg bone of the wild
 turkey (*Penelope purpurascens* Wagl.) is cut
 at the top of the joint and is utilized for round-
 ing the pellets of the blow gun. Deer bones
 are made into handles for rattles and fastened
 with *pita*.

412 Needles and Beads. *Pejibaye* thorns are used
 as well as bone for needles. Beads are fashioned
 301 from animal teeth (see Dress and Adornment),
 stones, shells, and seeds. The holes in all of
 these are made with an arrowhead or a fine
 432 *pejibaye* stick, sand, and water. On the Pacific
 side, needles are almost always bought.

237 Wax. Beeswax has varied uses. The two
 [411] most important ones are for fastening on the
 [354] sights of blow guns and for holding the shafts
 of lances and arrows in place. At times, wax
 is made into candles. It is very popular as an
 article of trade.

354 Light. Candles are made from the white and
 824 red *biguerilla*. When dry, the seeds are placed
 on top of each other and a stick is run through
 the center. In Chirripó, a piece of cotton is
 used as a wick in beeswax. The resin from
 copal (*Protium copal* Engl.) also serves as a
 light, as well as the sap of the red *mastate*.

237 Feathers. Bright feathers are used for adorn-
 [301] ment both on the house walls and as head-
 [372] dresses or around the neck. Tail feathers
 and/or wings of wild turkeys are generally
 used as fans for the fire.

388 Soap. The leaves and fruit of the *guanacaste*
 824 tree (*Enterolobium cyclocarpum* Griseb.) are
 boiled to make soap.